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# Senator and CIA General Counsel Joust Over Nomination to Bench

## *Denton Brings Spat With Sporkin Into the Open*

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CIA general counsel Stanley Sporkin and Sen. Jeremiah Denton (R-Ala.) sparred in public for the first time yesterday over Sporkin's 17-month-old nomination to U.S. District Court here.

Denton peppered Sporkin with critical questions, ranging from his tenure at the Securities and Exchange Commission to his acceptance of free football tickets from Washington Redskins owner Jack Kent Cooke.

The Senate Judiciary Committee hearing came after five closed sessions in which Denton pursued allegations that Sporkin improperly intervened in a probe by the Federal Bureau of Investigation of a leak of classified information by the Central Intelligence Agency.

Denton said the allegations, denied by Sporkin, raise questions about Sporkin's "judgment . . . judicial temperament and integrity." But Sen. Paul Simon (D-Ill.) said Sporkin simply "got caught in the middle" of "a disagreement between the FBI and the CIA."

Sporkin described Cooke as a friend and said the Redskins owner had given him tickets to about 10 football games and a free trip to the 1984 Super Bowl in Tampa. He said this was no problem because "there's

no dealings between Mr. Cooke and the CIA."

Denton asked whether Sporkin had accepted any cash during the Super Bowl trip. "Absolutely not, not a nickel," Sporkin said.

"Our information is there was \$100 in so-called walking-around money for incidental expenses," Denton said. Sporkin denied it.

Denton asked whether Sporkin, while the SEC's enforcement chief in the 1970s, had violated grand jury secrecy rules. "I have no recollection of that," Sporkin said. "Does that mean it's possible that you did?" Denton asked.

Denton said an affidavit from an SEC lawyer, whom he would not identify, charged that Sporkin had sought grand jury transcripts involving a probe of financier Robert Vesco. Sporkin said he had been in charge of the probe and was entitled to the information but could not respond further without knowing who was making the charge.

Denton also quoted from articles critical of Sporkin's actions at the SEC, including an editorial in *Barron's*, a financial weekly. "*Barron's* doesn't even believe in the SEC," Sporkin replied.

Most committee members have not been persuaded by the allegations, and the panel is expected to approve Sporkin's nomination Thursday. But it is unclear whether the Senate will have time to vote on it before adjourning for the holidays.